

VZCZCXRO2891  
RR RUEHGI RUEHMA RUEHROV  
DE RUEHNJ #0324 1021502  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 121502Z APR 07  
FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5145  
RUEHRN/USMISSION UN ROME 0023  
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS NDJAMENA 000324

SIPDIS

SIPDIS, SENSITIVE

KHARTOUM FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY  
STATE FOR AF/C MASHRAF, PRM/AF MLANG, AND S/CRS FOR  
PNELSON-DOUVELIS/JVANCE/JBEIK

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KCRS](#) [CD](#) [SU](#) [OTRA](#) [OVIP](#)

SUBJECT: CODEL McGovern Visits IDPs Fleeing Attacks

¶1. (U) SUMMARY. Rep. James McGovern and staffers, along with the Ambassador and Emboffs, witnessed the grave humanitarian crisis unfolding near Koukou Angarana in eastern Chad on 7 April. An estimated 9,000 people have fled west towards the area after attacks on the villages of Tiero and Marena starting over the weekend of March 31-April 1. Humanitarian workers were on the scene providing the first emergency response. Chadian Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) recounted similar stories of attacks by janjaweed militias, villages burned, and family members killed. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) CODEL McGovern, along with the Ambassador and Emboffs, visited Koukou Angarana in eastern Chad on 7 April, after visiting Abeche and the Gaga refugee camp the previous day (septel). The CODEL was accompanied by UNHCR Abeche Office Director Catherine Huck, who remained behind to work on the IDP emergency after the CODEL's departure. The delegation also visited the Goz Amer refugee camp, several IDP sites, and a village burned in December by janjaweed militias.

¶3. (U) An estimated 9,000 IDP's had poured in during the previous few days. Trucks were still pulling in during the visit filled with refugees found hiding out in the countryside. Hundreds were receiving vaccinations, foodstuffs, and non-food items (NFIs) by UNHCR and NGOs. Others were seated on mats or milling about looking for empty spots to set up shelters for their families.

¶3. (U) The stories told by the IDPs, as well as by humanitarian workers assisting them, were consistent. Over the weekend of March 31-April 1, the villages of Tiero and Mareno were attacked in three waves. The first came from militias riding in on horses and camels and using small arms. The villagers fired back in self-defense, but were overwhelmed by subsequent waves of attackers carrying heavy weapons. Most IDPs blamed janjaweed militias for launching the first attack and Chadian Arabs for joining in subsequent ones. The goal of the attackers, they claimed, was to drive them off their land. Some IDPs said they recognized the attackers as their Chadian neighbors.

¶4. (U) The death toll appeared to be significantly greater than the 65 deaths mentioned in initial estimates. An ICRC official said that, based on his visit to the villages to evacuate wounded, he estimated the death toll would be 200-400 people. Another NGO interlocutor estimated it would be four times the official count (i.e., about 260). Bodies were still being found in the bush. Due to the heat and rapid decomposition, many had been hastily buried. An ICRC official described Tiero as virtually completely destroyed, and Marena as about 20 percent destroyed.

¶5. (U) The UN and NGO workers thought that the attacks had generated about 9,000 IDPs. However, there was disagreement over how many were new IDPs and how many were secondary IDPs (i.e., people who were already IDPs, but felt that they had to flee again to a safer location). This influx of IDPs is in addition to the 20,000 already in the nearby settlement of Habile and the 19,000

refugees in the Goz Amer camp on the other side of Koukou Angarana. WFP representatives claimed they had sufficient stocks to feed all the IDPs in the area (a change from what they reported last month, before this new flux of IDPs).

¶6. (SBU) UN and NGO officials complained that they could not assist the victims as quickly as they wanted because of the slow response by the Chadian National Army (ANT). The ANT allegedly did not go to the towns for an entire day after the attacks because they did not have sufficient gasoline to drive there. Some believed the IDPs should remain in the Koukou Angarana area, not move further west to Goz Beida, where there is less water and arable land.

Comment

-----

¶7. (SBU) This is a dire humanitarian emergency that requires a massive and rapid response. Unless steps are taken to protect civilian populations in the area, if not by the Chadian army, then by a UN border force, the violence against them that caused it could happen again.

¶8. (U) Tripoli minimize considered. WALL